

RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF WELLS.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health FOR THE YEAR 1905.

STREET, SOMERSET,
JANUARY 29th, 1906.

To the Rural District Council of Wells.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,
I have the honour to submit my Report for the year ending December 31st, 1905.

Area.	58,212 Acres.
Population.	Census 1901 : 10,767. Estimated to middle of 1905 at 10,500.
Geology.	Dolomitic conglomerate at Chewton and Westbury ; mountain limestone at Priddy ; red marl at Dinder, North Wootton, and Rodney Stoke ; red marl and river gravel at Wookey ; lower lias at West Pennard, Baltonsborough, Butleigh, and Walton ; alluvium and peat at Glastonbury Moor.
Occupation.	Chiefly agricultural, cheese and cider making. Paper factories. Some of the inhabitants at Butleigh and Walton and Baltonsborough work at the shoe, leather, and skin factories at Street and Glastonbury, and at the quarries at Street.
Birth Rate.	250 Births registered (120 males, 130 females), giving a birth rate of 23.8 per 1,000 per annum.
Death Rate.	216 deaths registered (112 males, 104 females), giving a death rate of 20.5 per 1,000 per annum. 89 deaths occurred in the Somerset and Bath County Asylum at Wells. The <i>corrected death rate</i> for the Rural District is therefore 12.09 per 1,000 per annum.
Zymotic Death Rate.	Nine deaths registered from zymotic disease, giving a zymotic rate of 0.85 per 1,000 living.
Infant Mortality.	The Infant Mortality per 1,000 births is 96 ; 24 deaths under one year being registered.

FOR THE YEAR 1904.

Birth Rate.	Birth rate	...	...	per 1000 living	...	...	22.1
Death Rate.	Death rate	...	...	,,	,,	...	23.09
Corrected Death Rate.	Corrected Death rate	...	...	,,	,,	...	14.7
Zymotic Rate.	Zymotic Death rate	...	...	,,	,,	...	0.37
Infant Mortality.	Infant Mortality per 1000 births	...	...	...	...	...	81.1

Water Supply. At Butleigh, Chewton Mendip, Draycott, Dinder, North Wootton, Priddy, West Pennard, the supply is good—part of the latter district being supplied by the Glastonbury Corporation. Godney is supplied from the Street Supply (Mendips), and it is noteworthy this year that no case of infectious disease has been reported from this latter district. Part of Polsham is also supplied from the same source. Horrington has now a good supply of its own. Baltonsborough is now supplied by the District Council, through a supply obtained from the Shepton Mallet Rural District Council.

The remarks made concerning the parish of Meare last year are still applicable. At Meareway the wells are, in many places, in close contiguity to the sanitary offices or to the ditches into which the drainage runs. At Ashcott corner the supply is drawn from the river. Many of the wells in the Meare and Westhay district are shallow and especially liable to pollution, and during a spell of dry weather the supply is materially decreased.

At Sharpham the supply is obtained either from the ditches or the canal. The suggested stand-pipe from the Street Water Supply has not yet been erected. This I trust will not be much longer delayed.

At Walton the supply is from wells, and in dry weather runs short.

Several samples of water have been submitted to the County Analyst for examination, and I have examined a large number, during the year.

**Sewerage and
Drainage.**

No general system of drainage exists in the district. Privies with cesspits are principally in use; and being emptied infrequently, and at times draining into an adjoining water-course, are a source of danger. Where practicable, earth closets are recommended, and the further adoption of this method would, in my opinion, be a distinct advance in many parts of the district.

The pollution of the Coxley stream by the effluent from the Wells Sewage Works has recurred, and has occupied the Council's attention during the year. Samples of the effluent were forwarded to the County Analyst and reported on by him as containing sewage. The matter has been before the Wells City Council for some time. Measures will have to be adopted for the further treatment of the effluent, and so prevent the pollution of the stream.

**Prevalence of
Disease.**

Twenty-five cases of Scarlet Fever have been notified during the year: seventeen from Meare and Westhay, with one death (an adult); two from West Pennard; and one each from Rodney Stoke, Dinder, North Wootton, Butleigh, and Walton.

Fifteen cases of Diphtheria have been notified: one each from Wookey and Baltonsborough; three from the Sharpham district; and ten from the Meare district, with three deaths in the latter.

Along with the Inspector of Nuisances I have visited the premises in each instance; insanitary conditions being found in the majority of cases where diphtheria had been notified. Together we have made a house-to-house inspection of the Meare district, and reported fully thereon to the Rural District Council. Numerous notices were given to abate existing nuisances.

Four cases of Erysipelas have been notified during the year: one each from Westbury, Wookey, Priddy, and Meare.

Three cases of Enteric Fever have been notified: one from Priddy and two from the Wells Out district.

The Schools at Meare and Dinder were closed, on my advice, at the early part of the year, and the Draycott School by the Managers in May, owing to epidemic disease in the districts.

A case of Anthrax was reported by the Deputy Chief Constable in May, all the necessary steps being taken by the Police.

**Factory and Work-
shops Act.**

Inspections have been made by the Inspectors of Nuisances and by myself under this Act. Registers of Workshops are held, and the various Factories

and Workshops visited and inspected. The sanitation, ventilation, means of escape in case of fire, and the provision of suitable sanitary conveniences, attended to.

Table of Deaths. Ages Table of Deaths in the Rural District (Asylum Deaths excluded):

Under 1 year there were 24 deaths.
1 and under 5 years there were 7 deaths.
5 „ „ 15 „ „ „ 7 „
15 „ „ 25 „ „ „ 9 „
25 „ „ 65 „ „ „ 31 „
65 and upwards „ „ 49 „

Causes of Death.	Whooping Cough	...	...	4	Pneumonia	...	...	...	3
	Scarlet Fever	...	...	1	Pleurisy	...	...	...	1
	Diphtheria	...	...	3	Other Respiratory Diseases	...	...	...	3
	Epidemic Influenza	...	...	6	Cirrhosis of Liver	...	...	...	2
	Diarrhœa	...	...	1	Premature Birth	..	...	...	4
	Enteritis	...	...	4	Diseases and Accidents of				
	Other Septic Diseases	...	1		Parturition	...	...	...	4
	Phthisis	...	...	15	Heart Diseases	...	...	...	18
	Other Tubercular Diseases	...	3		Accidents	...	...	...	6
	Cancer	...	...	2	Suicide	...	...	...	1
	Bronchitis	...	...	7	All other causes	...	...	...	38

Isolation Hospital. Two Cottages at Worminster are retained by the Council for the isolation of any case of Small-pox that may arise. Their inaccessibility, however, preclude their use for general purposes.

Owing to the presence of Small-pox in an adjoining district during the summer, special vigilance was exercised over persons visiting or working in the district. Vaccination and re-vaccination was strongly recommended. Arrangements were made for the prompt isolation of any case occurring in this district. Fortunately no case arose.

Disinfection Means. Fumigation by sulphur candles. Disinfectants are gratuitously provided by the Rural District Council.

Housing of the Working Classes. Visits paid with the Inspector. Several cases of overcrowding reported upon and dealt with. One case prosecuted by the Rural District Council.

General Inspection. Slaughter-houses, Bake-houses, and Public Schools inspected.

Bye-Laws. None. A suitable code required.

I annex Tables of Statistics, together with the Reports of the Sanitary Inspectors, to whose co-operation I am again greatly indebted.

I have the honour to be,

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

GEORGE W. EGLINTON.

Reports and Summary of Inspectors of Nuisances.

DISTRICT No. 1.

I beg to present my report for the year ended December 31st, 1905.

During the year I have endeavoured to carry out the duties prescribed by the Local Government Board for an Inspector of Nuisances; attended all the Meetings of the Council to receive their instructions, and endeavoured to carry out the instructions of the Medical Officer of Health for the prevention of the spread of Infectious Disease.

The following is a summary of the cases reported by me to the Council, and dealt with by order:—

	No. of Cases.
Dwelling houses with insufficient privy accommodation	6
Dwelling houses overcrowded	9
Dwelling house unfit for human habitation: Notices served, occupation discontinued ..	1
Infected dwellings: Occupiers served with notices as to isolation of patients, disinfection, &c. (Disinfectants supplied by the Council) ...	9
Dwellings and clothing disinfected as directed by the Medical Officer of Health...	11
Public school premises disinfected as directed by the Medical Officer of Health...	2
New dwelling houses erected, for which certificates of occupation have been granted by the Council	8
Dilapidated and dangerous buildings repaired	3
Dilapidated and dangerous privies repaired	4
Nuisances arising from foul and choked drains, foul accumulations, &c. ...	26
Animals kept in such a state as to be a nuisance	1
New sewer laid	1
New drains laid and old ones repaired	16
Slaughter houses, bake houses, and public schools inspected (no bye-laws in force) ..	26
Pollution of streams dealt with	3
Samples of water submitted to the Medical Officer of Health	6
Samples of water submitted to the County Analyst	6
Wells opened and cleansed by order	3
Formal notices served by the Inspector	46

I have also, during the year, visited all the Factories and Workshops in the District, and found them in a fairly clean and satisfactory condition.

In addition to the above, a large number of inspections have been made, and verbal notice given to abate nuisances in my rounds and visits.

I have paid particular attention to the stream from the Wells Sewage Works *re* the pollution thereof, taken samples at different points in the stream and sent them to the County Analyst, and made a special report thereon.

I have also made an inspection of and reported upon the drainage of the village of Coxley.

PHILIP WILLIAMS, *Inspector No. 1 District.*

DISTRICT No. 2.

During the year I have again endeavoured to carry out the instructions of the Local Government Board Order prescribing the duties of Inspectors of Nuisances, reported to and attended the Meetings of the Council, and carried out their instructions, and also the directions of the Medical Officer of Health for the prevention of the spread of infectious disease.

The following is a summary of cases reported by me to the Council, and dealt with as under:—

	No. of Cases.
Nuisances arising from foul and choked drains and privies, foul accumulations, &c. ...	62
Infected dwellings: Occupiers served with notices as to isolation of patients and disinfection of dwellings, clothing, &c. (Disinfectants supplied gratuitously by the Council) ...	20
Dwellings, schoolrooms, clothing, &c., disinfected under the direction of the Medical Officer of Health	17
Dilapidated dwellings repaired by order	3
Animals so kept as to be a nuisance	8
Bake houses, slaughter houses, and offices of public schools inspected (no bye-laws in force)...	21
Formal notices served by the Inspector	111
Cases of overcrowding	3
Defective and inefficient privies remedied	12
Factories, workshops, &c., have received attention; one additional factory has been registered during the year	—
Certificate issued for new dwelling	1
Samples of water submitted to County Analyst	4
Wells opened, cleansed, and repaired by order	2
New drains laid and old ones repaired	9
Common sewer extended at Meare	1
The attention of the Managers of the Walton and also the Meare public schools have been called to the unsatisfactory closet arrangements, and considerable improvements have been made in both cases	2

In consequence of the serious outbreak of Small-pox in the adjoining district of Langport, and as several workmen living in this district had been in contact with persons suffering from the disease, numerous visits were made to their dwellings in connection with the Medical Officer of Health, and in several cases notices were served to prevent children from those dwellings attending the public schools, &c. The Isolation Cottages (for Small-pox cases) on Worminster Down were also prepared in case of need.

In addition to the above, a large number of inspections and re-inspections have been made, and verbal notices given by me in my rounds and periodical inspections, as well as rendering assistance in connection with the water supplies in the district.

EDWIN H. PADFIELD, *Inspector No. 2 District.*